

REMARKS

Priority Claim

Applicant requests that the Office acknowledge the claim of priority under 35 USC Section 119(e). The present application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/255,289, filed Dec. 13, 2000.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant requests that the Office acknowledge the Examiner review of the Information Disclosure Statement as noted in the Office Action Summary and designated Paper #2.

Drawings

Applicant requests that the Office to confirm that the Drawing Office has reviewed of the drawings.

Restriction

Applicant requests the Office to confirm that the restriction requirement of its paper dated 03/12/2003 has been withdrawn.

Allowed Claims/Allowable Subject Matter

The Office has allowed claims 15 - 20 as originally submitted, for which Applicant expresses its appreciation. The Office has identified claims 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 and 14 as objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but being allowable if rewritten to include the limitations of base and intervening claims.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

The Office has quoted the statute from 35 USC 103(a), which is referenced herein. The Office has rejected claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, and 13 thereunder as being unpatentable over Harpell's 5,196,252 alone.

Applicant notes that claim 7, here rejected, was otherwise identified as objected to but allowable if rewritten to include limitations of base and intervening claims. Applicant notes

further that claim 9 was not addressed as rejected, objected or allowed. Clarification is requested for both claims.

Applicant has without prejudice amended claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of objected claim 2, thereby making claim 1 allowable over Harpell. Rejected claims 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12 and 13 depending on claim 1 are thereby allowable for at least that reason.

Objected to claims 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 and 14 are likewise cured at least by the amendment to base claim 1. Claim 9, however intended, is allowable at least by virtue of being dependent on amended claim 1. New Claim 21 combines the subject matter of objected to claim 6 and its original base claim 1, thereby being allowable.

Applicant believes the above amendments and remarks to be fully responsive to the Office Action, thereby placing this application in condition for allowance. No new matter is added. Applicant requests speedy reconsideration, and further requests that Examiner contact its attorney by telephone, facsimile, or email for quickest resolution, if there are any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Vernon C. Maine', written over a horizontal line.

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